the Alliance Witness

(FORMERLY THE ALLIANCE WEEKLY)

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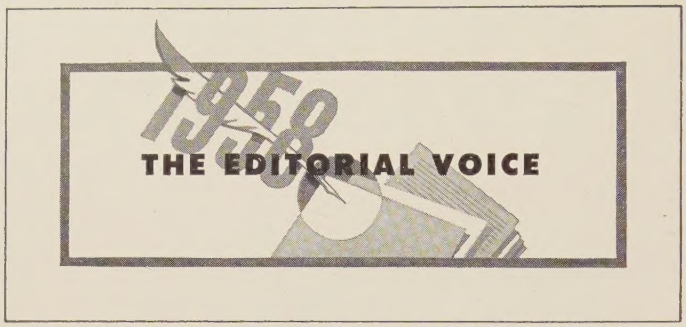
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

DECEMBER 17, 1958

C. WILLIAMS

DECEMBER 1

★ ★ ★ Merry Christmas ★ ★ ★



THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

"Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!"

—Phillips Brooks.

That there were in the world multiplied millions who had never heard of Christmas did not matter to our poet for the purpose of his poem. He was expressing an emotional fact, not a statistical one.

Throughout the Western world we tend to follow the poet and approach Christmas emotionally instead of factually. It is the romance of Christmas that gives it its extraordinary appeal to that relatively small number of persons of the earth's population who regularly celebrate it.

So completely are we carried away by the excitement of this midwinter festival that we are apt to forget that its romantic appeal is the least significant thing about it. The theology of Christmas too easily gets lost under the gay wrappings, yet apart from its theological meaning it really has none at all. A half dozen doctrinally sound carols serve to keep alive the great deep truth of the Incarnation, but aside from these, popular Christmas music is void of any real lasting truth. The English mouse that was not even stirring, the German *Tannenbaum* so fair and lovely and the American red-nosed reindeer that has nothing to recommend it have pretty well taken over in Christmas poetry and song. These along with merry old St. Nicholas have about displaced Christian theology.

We must not forget that the Church is the custodian of a truth so grave and urgent that its importance cannot be overemphasized, and so vast and incomprehensible that even an apostle did not try to explain it; rather it burst forth from him as an astonished exclamation:

> *"And without controversy*
> *great is the mystery of godliness:*
> *God was manifest in the flesh,*
> *justified in the Spirit,*
> *seen of angels,*
> *preached unto the Gentiles,*
> *believed on in the world,*
> *received up into glory."*

This is what the Church is trying to say to mankind, but her voice these days is thin and weak and scarcely heard amid the commercialized clangor of Silent Night.

It does seem strange that so many persons become excited about Christmas and so few stop to inquire into its meaning; but I suppose this odd phenomenon is quite in harmony with our unfortunate human habit of magnifying trivialities and ignoring matters of greatest import. The same man who will check his tires and consult his road map with utmost care before starting on a journey may travel for a lifetime on the way that knows no return and never once pause to ask whether or not he is headed in the right direction.

The Christmas message, when stripped of its pagan overtones, is relatively simple: God is come to earth in the form of man. Around this one dogma the whole question of meaning revolves. God did come or He did not; He is come or He is not, and the vast accumulation of sentimental notions and romantic practices that go to make up our modern Christmas cannot give evidence on one side or the other.

Certain religious teachers in apostolic times refused to believe that Jesus was actually God come in the flesh. They were willing to exhaust the language of unctuous flattery to describe His glorious manhood but they would have none of His deity. Their basic philosophy forbade them to believe that there could ever be a union of God and human flesh. Matter, they said, is essentially evil. God who is impeccably holy could never allow Himself contact with evil. Human flesh is matter, therefore God is not come in the flesh.

Certainly it would not be difficult to refute this negative teaching. One would only need to demonstrate the error of the major premise, the essential sinfulness of matter, and the whole thing would collapse. But that would be to match reason against reason and take the mystery of godliness out of the realm of faith and make of it merely another religious philosophy. Then we would have rationalism with a thin Christian veneer. How long before the veneer wore off and we had only rationalism?

While faith contains an element of reason, it is essentially moral rather than intellectual. In the New Testament unbelief is a sin, and this could not be so if belief were no more than a verdict based upon evidence. There is nothing unreasonable about the Christian message, but its appeal is not primarily to reason. At a specific time in a certain place God became flesh, but the transcendence of Christ over the human conscience is not historic; it is intimate, direct and personal.

Christ's coming to Bethlehem's manger was in harmony with the primary fact of His secret presence in the world in preincarnate times as the Light that lighteth every man. The sum of the New Testament teaching about this is that Christ's claims are self-validating and will be rejected only by those who love evil. Whenever Christ is preached in the power of the Spirit a judgment seat is erected and each hearer stands to be judged by his response to the message. His moral responsibility is not to a lesson in religious history but to the divine Person who now confronts him.

"Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight." But Christmas either means more than is popularly supposed or it means nothing. We had better decide.

PHILIP GENDREAU

A Palestinian home typical of the time of Christ

The man God chose to be Mary's husband and protector for the infant Jesus commands our admiration. His example deserves our close attention.

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The Forgotten Man of Christmas

By REV. LEROY C. WEBBER

As far as most people are concerned, Joseph is definitely in the shadows at Christmas time. We know that he is there, yet he does not attract our attention. It is possible to go through the entire Christmas season without mentioning his name.

I think it is important to note where Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus Christ places emphasis. Luke centers his interest upon Mary, but Matthew gives Joseph the place of prominence. The second chapter of Matthew tells the story of the coming of the Wise Men. Unfortunately, we let the splendor of that event blind our eyes to the simple, blessed facts in the verses immediately preceding.

Joseph ought to claim more of our attention at Christmas time because he occupies such a large place in the Christmas story. We become acquainted with the character of Mary both through the account in the Scripture and through the inferences that may be drawn from it. We ought also to be better acquainted with the wonderful character of Joseph. Three statements are made concerning him, and the circumstances lead us to a number of conclusions about this man (Matt. 1:18-25).

The first statement is found in verse 19 where we learn that he was "a just man." Sometimes we read this story carelessly and do not understand what that implies. It is this: As a just man Joseph would consider himself obliged to put away Mary now that she was with child. What anguish must have filled the heart of Joseph because of these unusual circumstances! How many hours he must have given to anxious consideration of this problem. No doubt he looked for a reasonable explanation; no doubt he sought for a way out of the dilemma, but none could be found. Since he was a just man he could not take this woman to himself. To do so would make him party to the apparent immorality. A man of no moral principles would have been ruled by sympathy or expediency, but Joseph was a just man. This quality of rightness led him to choose the right course no matter what that might cost.

A great controversy must have raged in the heart of Joseph. He knew the character of his beloved, or at least he thought he did. How could he have been so mistaken? Was there a proper explanation? Joseph was not able to believe what he wanted to believe. He believed the thing that was forced upon him by circumstances. Doubtless it was with great sadness and anguish of heart he came to his decision. I am sure that he did not love Mary less, for he sought to soften the blow that must fall upon her. Instead of making her a public example he decided to act secretly. With a broken heart he proceeded to do the thing that had to be done.

This quality in Joseph is a portrayal of the character of God. This is the very word used by John: "If

Mr. Webber is the pastor of Long Hill Chapel of The C. & M. A., Chatham, N. J.

we confess our sins, he is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1st. Ep. 1:9). This tells us very plainly that God is just. This speaks of the rectitude of His character, His inherent rightness, an honesty that cannot be swerved by expediency. If God is not just, then He is nothing of value! He is capricious; He can be moved by circumstances. What He will do today perhaps He will not do tomorrow. His adherence to law today may not be there tomorrow. Perhaps some sympathy will move His heart and His justice will be gone. But He *is* just. In Joseph's decision I think we see a picture of Almighty God judging sin as it must be judged, but doing it with a broken heart. He loves us still!

This quality of God cannot be overemphasized. More light is thrown upon this word in Ephesians 6:1 where we read, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." That word "right" is our word "just" again. In the light of God's will and God's law there is an action that is right in every circumstance. This action should be our action. Joseph was a man who did what he judged to be *right* regardless of the cost to himself. We can be sure that God always does right. His judgments are true, not being influenced by limited knowledge. We must have this concept of God or we cannot believe in God at all.

It is a wonderful thing to contemplate the love and the mercy of God, but unless these qualities are related to His rightness, they provide no comfort for the soul. His righteousness would be stern indeed without His love, but it is *not* without His love. His love provided for us salvation in and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we come by the way of the Lord Jesus and claim His promises, we are sure that we receive the things that He has promised because He is just.

Certainly a God who will judge sin but is willing to forgive the sinner is worthy of all respect. In what contrast are the capricious gods of the heathen, devoid of moral standards and moral attributes. God must be just if He is to be anything at all. Joseph was just, as far as his knowledge went, and this characteristic threatened to bring grief to himself and to Mary.

The second thing said about Joseph is found in verse 20. The angel of the Lord spoke to him in a dream and called him "son of David." It is clear that he was a son of David. The genealogy that preceded this story bears that out. Yet this must be more than a reference to genealogy. It must have been intended as an indication of the character of Joseph. There was something about this man that made him a true "son of David." Just as God carefully chose the woman who was to be the earthly mother of Christ, so I believe He carefully chose the man who would serve as father in the home, although the record very plainly tells us that he was not the natural father. This word by the angel is God's evaluation of the man—he was "a son of David."

This statement links Joseph very definitely with the Lord Jesus Christ. Later Matthew uses this phrase again. Of the day of Christ's entry into Jerusalem (21:9) Matthew wrote, "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David." We would not be amiss if we analyze the qualities appearing in Christ at this occasion and note the similarities in Joseph.

There is a third noteworthy thing in these verses. The remainder of the account shows Joseph to be a man completely obedient to God. "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him" (1:24). The angel had told him to do two things. He did both of them.

First he was told, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." This was not a command. If he had been arbitrarily commanded to take her there would be no virtue in his act except the fact that he obeyed. But there was more here than obedience. Although he understood by then the supernatural circumstances, he knew they could not be explained to the satisfaction of every neighbor and friend. By taking her he would have to share the unjust shame in the

(Continued on page 8)

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We wish you

A Merry Christmas

To our readers we extend our warmest greetings
May Christmas bring to each of you this year
every simple joy and lasting benediction

The Alliance Witness Staff

Evangelism's New Edge in England

By HERBERT F. STEVENSON

Beginning with the issue of December 4 the British magazine, "The Life of Faith," is carrying ALLIANCE WITNESS *editorials as a biweekly feature. These will appear simultaneously in the two magazines.*

"The Life of Faith" is published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott, of London, and is a widely read and highly respected evangelical journal. It is closely related in its doctrinal emphasis with the Keswick movement of England, which as is known to almost all readers is devoted to the victorious Christian life.

THE ALLIANCE WITNESS *will from time to time carry helpful and interesting material written by the editor of "The Life of Faith," Rev. Herbert F. Stevenson. The first article appears here. We are sure our American and Canadian readers will profit by these intimate accounts of religious activities in the British Isles.*—A. W. T.

EVANGELISM has received new mpetus in Britain since the Billy Graham crusades in London and Glasgow. This does not mean we re experiencing a rising tide of piritual quickening as a nation. On he contrary, it must frankly be conessed that the hopes of true revival wakened by the crusades have not een realized. Dr. Graham expressed he conviction that we stood on the rink of a new movement of the Spirit throughout the land: alas, the ide of interest which seemed to be lowing in so strongly quickly reeded, and as a nation we are in as lesperate need of revival as ever in ur history.

Voices of criticism have not been low to suggest that Dr. Graham's isits to Britain have had no abiding ffect. That is untrue—profoundly o. While a disturbingly high perentage of the "inquirers" have lrifted away from the churches and ow appear to be as worldly as they vere before the crusades, yet a very onsiderable number are manifestng the fruits of true conversion. The most valuable results of the rusades, however, are to be found n revitalized Christian life and witess in countless churches, and a ubtle change of attitude on the part f the populace generally toward vangelism. For while the masses f people will not attend meetings, there is nevertheless decidedly more interest and greater readiness to listen than before. This means that there is more "heart" in evangelism, more zest and a stronger note of conviction, and encouraging, though by no means spectacular, response thereto.

The winter's activity has begun promisingly with the launching of several significant campaigns. First, Tom Rees is touring "from Land's End to John o' Groats" in a six months' "Mission to Britain" initiated at a dedication service in St. Paul's Cathedral, an almost unheard-of event for a free-lance evangelistic effort. Spending only one night in each center, Mr. Rees is visiting small towns often bypassed by evangelists, and the week ends in county cities. Thus he is conducting rallies six nights a week, with a respite only on Mondays. Good attendances are reported from most centers and the venture is being followed with keen interest by evangelicals all over the land, but it has yet to be proven how effective this "Round Britain Whiz" will be, evangelistically. His small team travels with him by car and motor scooter.

Rev. J. D. Blinco has just concluded a notable campaign in Cardiff, as follow-up to a crusade held during the Commonwealth Games in July. Young people especially responded well. Eric Hutchings, an independent evangelist, had the support of all the evangelical churches in Bolton, an important manufacturing center in the Midlands, in a city-wide crusade early in November. The meeting place of the crusade, Victoria Hall, stands on the site of a Methodist church which sprang from John Wesley's memorable visits to the city. Here also encouraging numbers came forward night after night for counseling.

An outstanding event in witness among students is the Triennial Mission at Cambridge University. The last was conducted by Billy Graham, and great crowds thronged to his meetings in the University Church of Great St. Mary's. He was then assisted by Rev. John R. W. Stott, a foremost evangelical Anglican, who led the Mission to the University November 9-16 this year. A score or more of assistant missioners lived in the various colleges for the duration of the mission for informal meetings and personal counseling.

One of our most vigorously evangelistic youth movements, the National Young Life Campaign, is planning a three-year "Greater London Youth Crusade." A preliminary conference was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Cyril W. Black, J.P., M.P. Mr. Black is an eminent Baptist evangelical layman, who sponsored the recent London visit of Charles and Laurie Taylor.

One of the most heartening features in the life of Britain today is the steady development of the Christian Unions in various professions, business houses, trading groups and factories. These are groups of Christians seeking to witness for the Lord in everyday life. Usually they arrange weekly meetings for prayer and mutual encouragement, but their primary pur-

pose is to reach their colleagues and fellow workers with the gospel. Since the great majority of the population of Britain is out of touch with the churches, this personal evangelism on the part of Christians in their places of business is most important.

Now a number of the larger Christian Unions will coöperate in a "Tell London" campaign in the new year. Midday evangelistic services will be held in several London churches, mostly renowned Wren churches, from January to March, and there will be evening services for nurses at London hospitals. The effort will culminate with a combined campaign at the Westminster Central Hall—Methodism's largest auditorium, seating 3,000—April 6-17, in which several well-known evangelists are taking part. The aim throughout will be to reach non-Christians invited to the meetings by the members of the various Christian Unions. It is hoped this will be the reaping time resulting from long sowing through personal witness.

All these tokens of evangelistic zeal are encouraging. But we sorely need the "breath from on high" which would bring the revival for which we have prayed so earnestly. "Brethren, pray for us." ◆ ◆ ◆

Thou Long-expected Jesus

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

—CHARLES WESLEY.

Pilate's Day of Destiny

By J. STUART HOLDEN

IN the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of St. John's Gospel is part of the record of Pilate's contact with Christ. There clear and certain appear the issues with which Pilate was confronted, the choice he was compelled to make and the wreck that he made of his opportunity.

Little is known about the man himself, for he was brought into prominence only on account of his temporary contact with Christ. He was just an ordinary Roman civil servant, possessing all the aptitudes of the governing classes. The main characteristic of his life was his haughty contempt for the people among whom his lot was cast. He was a man with some degree of cynicism and cruelty, as is evidenced by the event recorded by one of the evangelists – that in order to quell a Galilean uprising of the peasant classes he mingled their blood with their sacrifices and cruelly slaughtered defenseless men. Then, under stress of circumstances and by divine providential direction, Pilate was brought face to face with Jesus Christ, of whom he must have heard, for by this time Christ's fame had spread abroad.

There, in the early morning, dragged before Pilate by His Jewish haters, Jesus stands for examination. Pilate has risen from sleep, just as on every other morning of his life. There was nothing to mark it off as the day in which his destiny was to be determined, nothing to mark it off from one of the common days, and yet it was the great opportunity of his soul. This is part of the tragedy and mystery of life for all of us—that our high hours come to us unheralded. We do not see the potentiality of the hour until it has gone.

It is to be noticed that at the outset all Pilate's arrogance vanishes. He is arrogant with the Jews who bring Christ to him, but there is nothing arrogant in his attitude towards Christ. The man stands revealed to himself, as he is revealed to all ages, by that interview. The great man, in that hour, is seen to be pitifully small; the strong man is seen to be morally weak. There is an utter absence of spiritual and moral courage. This is a record, not only of the examination of the prisoner, but of the utter condemnation of the judge. That always happens when a soul is brought face to face with Christ, with the inevitability of choice.

Let us attempt to reconstruct the scene at least in some of its essential features. Pilate grasps at a straw when he learns that Jesus is of Herod's jurisdiction, and he at once seeks to rid himself of further em barrassment by sending Him to Her od. But ere long Christ returns Pilate has sought to rid himself o the necessity of choice, but he find himself confronted once again wit the Son of God.

How many there are today wh do this same thing when brough into contact with Christ! They ar awakened to a recognition of Chris and, in Him, their own destiny. Bu they put conviction from them, an they think that by banishing Hi from their minds they have banishe Him from their whole life interes And then—blessed be God for Hi wonderful patience and persistenc with men—Christ comes back, an the whole scene reconstructs itself

Herod, doubtless, sent Christ bac to Pilate to rid himself of the silen Prisoner, and Pilate, with irritation sees Him returning. Then Chris begins to disclose Himself to Pilate He sees him, not merely as th figurehead of the Roman Govern ment, not merely as the man on th judgment seat, but as a soul to b won, as a life filled with possibilitie of useful service. Pilate takes Chris into the inner place, and examine Him: "Art thou the King of th Jews?" he asks. And Christ searche his soul by the query with which H responds: "Sayest thou this thin

f thyself, or did others tell it thee e me?" Christ is ever sympathetic ith the man whose doubts are onest.

Christ further tests Pilate with a reat declaration and disclosure con- erning His Kingdom. "My king- om is not of this world," He says. Then anything that is not of this vorld does not concern me," thinks 'ilate to himself. Christ continues: For this cause came I into the vorld, that I should bear witness nto the truth."

In all probability Pilate was a dis- ppointed, embittered man. His po- itical aspirations had never been chieved; his hopes had never been ully realized; he had drunk of the up of life and found it bitter in he dregs. It may not have been ynicism, but rather the petulant veariness of a man who had been leceived, that prompted the ques- ion, "What is truth?" Pilate had nixed with men in the world, but e had not met truth, only self-seek- ng. Then Jesus says to him: "Every ne that is of the truth—every true nan whose heart is pure and whose ife is true—heareth my voice." And n the presence of the Truth Him- elf, Pilate yet fails to recognize Him.

Meanwhile the clamor of the Jews s heard. They are beginning to be mpatient at the parleying with their risoner. And Pilate, face to face vith a great moral question, attempts o compromise. Oh, the weakness f the man who will compromise in noral issues! Listen to Pilate as he ays: "I will . . . chastise Him, and et him go. I will appease you by nflicting cruel pain upon Him, and will appease my own conscience n the same way." There are those oday who do the same thing. They ay, "We will not deny Christ; we vill not utterly turn from Him. But s for taking up the cross and follow- ng Him, as for openly avowing our- elves His disciples—no, the cost of hat is too great."

Listen again. Pilate cannot put is conscience to rest; he is uneasy. He brings Christ forth, with His back ruised and bleeding, and says, "Be- old the man!" It may be that ilate's heart was wrung with pity for he silent Sufferer, and he brought Him forth before the people as if, y so doing, he might change their malice and turn them from their in- tent. "I find no fault in him," he says. That is the voice of Pilate's conscience. "We have a law . . . (that) he ought to die," cry the people.

Pilate at once sees himself en- meshed in circumstances which he cannot alter. "If I let Him go it may mean for me political ruin; it may mean poverty," he says to him- self. Then once again he speaks to Christ, but Christ has no answer to give him. Christ's patience is not exhausted—it never is. But Christ, by His very silence, rebukes the craven cowardice of the man who has turned from light to darkness.

Then Pilate bursts out: "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee?" Listen to Christ's final word: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." Christ here definitely relates Pilate to his responsibility to the God whom he acknowledged, though he knew it not. What was its effect upon Pilate? "From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him." This is not the action of a careless man but of a man quickened, a man who has begun to realize that he is in the presence of the sovereign God.

God in His love and mercy seeks to save Pilate from the catastrophe which is inevitable, and his wife is used as the last instrument. She sends a message to her husband, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." It seems as though God is using the tenderest agency available to reach this man's soul. There he is with all the influences of heaven focused upon him.

"Thou art not Caesar's friend" is the cry that breaks in upon the soul that is almost decided. And here is the tragedy—their voices "prevailed" and the voice of conscience was stifled; the love of God was de- feated on the great moral battlefield of a man's inner being. Once again the choice has been made for dark- ness as against light. This is the fatal line of least resistance in moral and spiritual issues. When decision is most difficult, that is the hour when it is most important.

"What shall I do then with Jesus?" "He delivered him to be crucified." Pilate calls for water and osten- tatiously washes his hands before the people, as though to attach the guilt of it all to them. Pilate writes a title and puts it on the cross, and he writes more truly than he knows. And later, when challenged by the Jews, he spoke more truly than he knew when he said, "What I have written I have written." Not even the fire of the Judgment Day can burn out the record of the writing of that hour.

We read nothing more of Pilate. His future is obscure and hidden. There was not much to say of him before he came into touch with Christ and there is still less to say of him now. There are many legends concerning him. We have stood on the shore of Lake Lucerne and looked at the frowning face of Mount Pilatus, and have been re- minded of the man who is supposed to have drowned himself in one of the lonely tarns. We do not know how far such legends are true, but we may be certain that Pilate lost the very world for which he sacri- ficed Christ. The eternal possibility of that hour was lost upon him. And that is the peril that we all have to face. ◆ ◆ ◆

Art Thou Come With Us to Dwell?

And art Thou come with us to dwell,
Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord?
And is Thy name Immanuel,
God present with His world restored?

The heart is glad for Thee! it knows
None now shall bid it err or mourn;
And o'er its desert breaks the rose
In triumph o'er the grieving thorn.

Thou bringest all again; with Thee
Is light, is space, is breadth and room
For each thing fair, beloved, and free
To have its hour of life and bloom.

The world is glad for Thee! the heart
Is glad for Thee! and all is well,
And fixed and sure, because Thou art,
Whose name is called Immanuel!

—Dora Greenwell.

Quotes from Our Contemporaries

In *The Evangelical Beacon,* LESTER P. WESTLUND declares:

"The Word of God abounds in calls to surrender. While the figures of speech may vary, there is one basic ingredient in the entire process of surrender, namely, a recognition of the Lordship of Christ. Any so-called surrender that does not give Christ the 'all and in all' is only a temporary arrangement and will collapse like a paper house when the hour of stress and strain comes upon the soul."

Says VERNON GROUNDS, in *Eternity:*

"The faith which saves is a faith which fills our hearts with adoration for Jesus Christ and flaming devotion for Him. Squirm as we may, twist as we like, exegete as we please, that is the whole thrust of the New Testament: faith in Jesus Christ, though loudly and publicly declared, means nothing to God if in the depths of our hearts we fail to love His only BEGOTTEN *Son who on the cross became for our sakes His only* FORGOTTEN *Son."*

E. W. LAWRENCE, in *God's Revivalist,* exhorts:

"God has called us unto holiness. The need today for a rediscovery of, and a re-emphasis upon, holiness teaching and holy living is greater than ever."

MARTIN ERIKSON, in *The Standard,* says:

"Throughout the New Testament voices are calling Christians to be joyful. . . . Whatever the Christian encounters, he never lacks reasons for rejoicing. His joy does not depend on outward circumstances. Happiness requires no favorable happenings. Neither trials nor difficulties can in themselves stop the flow of gladness. Poverty or wealth should not detract from his joy."

The Forgotten Man of Christmas

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eyes of those who did not understand and would not believe. Nevertheless he took her. The angel's explanation was sufficient to overbalance the awful insinuations they would face. He had no further doubt. His beloved without question was still pure and unsullied. He therefore did what in his heart he longed to do, and took her for his wife.

The other occasion for his obedience concerns the naming of our Lord. Joseph was told that he should give the child His name. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The whole Christmas story is told in this one verse, but how often we overlook the fact that Joseph had his part, as well as Mary and our Lord Himself. He was to give our Lord this name. Every time we say this blessed name we give testimony to the obedience of this man who was able to hear the word of the Lord from the angel.

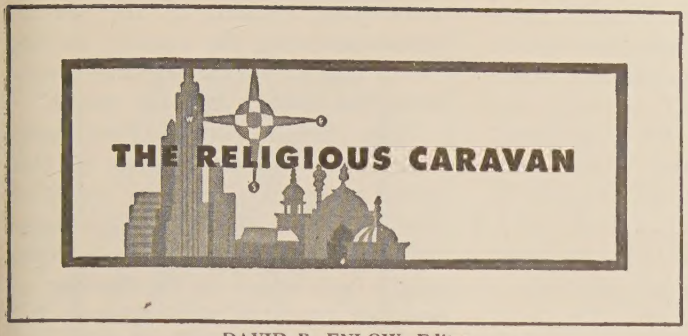
We ought to draw two conclusions from this wonderful story. The first and most obvious is that Joseph could not possibly be the natural father of the Lord Jesus Christ. If he were the natural father, this account given in Matthew is not true. There would be no avoiding this admission. There is no room for misunderstanding. If he were the father and was not willing to take Mary as his wife, we could have no use for such a man. If he were the father and both of them put forth this story, then they both would be immoral on two counts.

The truth of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ rests upon more than theological interpretation or necessity. It is supported by more than a mere translation of words. It is the plain, unequivocal teaching of the Scripture. Evidently God considered this fact central enough to state it in a way that could not be misunderstood. Joseph's whole trouble as described in the first chapter of Matthew is that Mary was with child of the Holy Ghost, and it was something outside of his experience. Until he realized what God was doing he was filled with anguish. He did not have the advantage of Matthew's viewpoint who wrote later that this thing was prophesied years before.

The second conclusion we ought to see is that the infant Lord Jesus needed the protection not only of a mother but of a father. How difficult it would have been for Mary and the baby Jesus if Joseph had been unwilling to listen to the Lord, if he had been disobedient and selfish, refusing to bear the responsibility entrusted to him. The second chapter of Matthew shows how great was the need for protecting our Lord, and I think it is significant that God spoke to Joseph about it rather than to Mary. Certainly we can infer from this that God places a high value on the place of fathers as well as of mothers.

We should consider too the unbelievable humbling involved in the coming of the little Babe of Bethlehem. With one giant step we turn to the picture of Christ given by John in the Book of the Revelation and see Him in all His power and majesty. Let us never forget that Christ is no babe now. Let us not allow the beauty and sentiment of Christmas rob us of a Christ who possesses "all power . . . in heaven and earth" and is glorified "at the right hand of God."

Let us ever remember that this humbling to be born was in order that He might be humbled to die for us, but on the other side of the cross stands the empty tomb, and our Christ today is living and triumphant. He partook of flesh and blood for us that we might partake of the glory that is His. Let us not seek to worship a little baby in his mother's arms; let us remember that He is the mighty Christ exalted far above all. ◆ ◆ ◆



DAVID R. ENLOW, Editor

AT HOME

NAE to meet in Los Angeles: Plans are well under way for the 1959 Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals, scheduled for April 6-10 in Los Angeles, Calif.

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100,000 foreign students in U. S.: More than 100,000 foreign nationals are temporarily residing in the United States, according to figures compiled by International Students, Inc. Thus one of the greatest foreign missionary opportunities of all time is here on our doorstep.

●

TV Bible study proves popular: Sponsors of the first college course in Bible study over television in Washington, D. C., said they were "astonished" by the tremendous response it had received. More than 1,000 persons have sent in registration fees of $2.00 to the department of religion of American University for study guides and other material with which to follow the hour-long Saturday morning telecasts. More than 100 others have paid a $20.00 fee in order to receive two hours of college credit for taking the course. They will come to the campus for final examinations and will write term papers. American University is a Methodist institution.

ABROAD

New Antilles radio station begins: TEAM's new missionary radio station on the Island of Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles began broadcasting Sunday, November 2. The broadcasts were initiated with a dedication service in the presence of the Lieutenant Governor, community leaders, representatives of the press, more than 500 members of the Christian community and their friends.

●

World Congress for Christian Youth: Youth for Christ of South India is sponsoring the 10th World Congress for Christian Youth, January 4-10, 1959. The Congress is expected to draw about 800 Christian young people from all over India, as well as from other countries.

●

New correspondence study announced: Orient Crusades has announced the production of a new correspondence course. Prepared by Missionary Don Hillis, this study of the Epistle to the Galatians is titled "Christian Liberty Course" and is the third in the series of the Light of Life correspondence school program. A six-lesson study, prepared particularly with Latin America in mind, it has already been printed in India and is now in the final stages of preparation in Spanish.

●

Southern Baptists expanding: The Southern Baptists have decided to open missionary work in Viet Nam. The decision came as the result of a visit to Viet Nam made by Dr. Winston Crawley.

●

Lutheran Hour expands: During the past year the Lutheran Hour gospel broadcast has been sent to eleven new lands in five new languages. These include Thailand, Togoland, Nigeria and several other African countries. Altogether the Lutheran Hour is released by 1,044 radio stations around the world. It is broadcast in 68 countries and in 59 languages, at a cost of $1,545,000 annually.

THE PRESS

***Sunday School Times* 100th anniversary:** Not many papers in the United States can claim one hundred years of continuous publication. Among the many thousands listed in the 1958 edition of "N. W. Ayer & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals," only forty-six religious periodicals and newspapers are shown as having been established as long as *The Sunday School Times.* The first issue of the *Times* was dated January 1, 1859, and it is planned to make the first issue of 1959 a special Centenary Number.

PEOPLE

Evangelist from India tours U. S.: Bakht Singh, widely known evangelist and Bible expositor of India, is visiting the United States and speaking at missionary meetings and deeper life conferences in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis and other cities. Singh's current visit to America, which extends through January, 1959, is under the auspices of International Students, Inc.

PEOPLE SAY

Hon. Mark O. Hatfield, Republican governor-elect of Oregon: "When a nation's spiritual life pales, becomes fat, flabby and weak, that nation is going to fall. . . . Christianity, like Communism, demands the total man. . . . As Christians we must grow, and our food for growth comes through the textbook of faith—the Bible."

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Religion and hypnosis: A Jewish rabbi has suggested that Old Testament prophets probably actually were under self-hypnosis when they saw visions—and that modern-day prayer involves the same principle. Speaking on a panel that also included a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister, Rabbi Glasner aired his views before the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis at a meeting in Chicago.

WELDON B. BLACKFORD, Editor

Keeping Christmas Well

By MRS. GORDON WISHART

Charles Dickens ends his immortal *Christmas Carol* speaking of the regeneration of Ebenezer Scrooge: "For it was said of him that he knew how to *keep Christmas well.*" This should be the aim of every AYFer—to "keep Christmas well."

We all love the Christmas symbols. Christmas bells! What a jubilant note rings out as they clash and clang in the clear frosty air! Christmas greens! The boughs, the wreaths, the trees, the holly, the mistletoe—all significant decorations for the festive season! Christmas carols! How they reveal the message of the angels! Because they come to us from the hearts of those who expressed their emotions in song, each year our own hearts thrill to their glad message.

Underlying all of these beloved symbols is the most significant of all —light. The source of inspiration for this beautiful symbol is not the pagan Yule and Saturnalia, but the birth of the Saviour, the Light of the World. It is not the light of the winter solstice, but the Light of the Star of Bethlehem.

When Christmas makes its appearance around the world, there, also, light appears. The lighted Christmas tree originated in Germany where Martin Luther is credited with having decorated the first one. Walking through the forest on Christmas eve, the stars shining through the evergreens impressed him so much he attempted to show his family a sight like it by cutting down a little tree and decorating it with lighted candles.

From rural Austria came the custom of putting lighted candles in the windows. The lighted candle was placed in the window on Christmas Eve so that the Christ Child might not stumble as He passed through the village.

In the Alpine country this symbol took the form of a torch. On Christmas Eve the member living farthest from the church lit his torch and carried it to the nearest neighbor who in turn took his light from it and proceeded to the next neighbor, and so on, until all arrived at the church together with their lighted torches.

The Danes celebrated Christmas around huge fires, while in neighboring countries the appearance of the first star on Christmas Eve was the symbol for lighting the lamps and beginning the Christmas festivities. Throughout the bleak English countryside, the yule log was kindled with a brand from the log of the previous year.

By the friendly open fireplace our children hang their stockings on Christmas Eve, and around it family and friends love to gather for Christmas celebrations. To all of these sources of light, the fire, candle and yule log, have been added the glittering array of gaily colored electric lights that brighten our homes, churches, cities, towns and villages at Christmas time.

These lights have become the underlying symbol of the season commemorating the coming of that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

How better can AYFers keep Christmas than by adding to this great array of Christmas splendor their own special light? "Let *your* light so shine." Why? That your light might lead others to the Saviour as truly as the Star of Bethlehem led the Wise Men to the Christ Child at that first glad Christmas season.

Ten Commandments

for the Christmas Season

1. Thou shalt keep Christ in thy Christmas.

2. Thou shalt let no festivity come between thee and Christ.

3. Thou shalt exalt His name, so full of Christmas meaning.

4. Thou shalt remember His day in special worship.

5. Thou shalt give special consideration to Mother and Dad during the Christmas season.

6. Thou shalt demonstrate the spirit of love.

7. Thou shalt exercise faithfulness to the Christian testimony.

8. Thou shalt keep the spirit of generosity.

9. Thou shalt keep the peace by following Truth.

10. Thou shalt live for others, remembering Christ who came and "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Christmas Testimonies

"As Christmas approaches, my newfound joy is that after the lapse of nearly twenty centuries, the Matchless Christmas Gift, Christ, has not changed and cannot change!"—D. E.

"The fresh realization that 'the Word [which] was made flesh' is not only my Lord and Saviour, but the Prince of Peace as well, makes this a happy Christmas for me."—A. E.

"Because of God's working in my life my thoughts and worship turn more and more toward Him. I thank Him for the joy and peace He gives, not only at Christmas but through the whole year."—E. H.

Short Term Bible Schools a Boon

By A STUDENT, *Viet Nam*

Through a gift by one of God's servants in America the Alliance Mission has erected buildings and established a conference and Bible school center in South Viet Nam. This gift is already paying interest.

After the first session of the short term Bible school in March there was no further need of advertising. The thirty-six young people who attended went back to their churches praising God for a month well spent. When the second session opened in July over one hundred young men and women flooded into the new compound. I thank God that I was one of that number, and I am grateful to the ones through whom He made it possible.

Each student paid his own traveling expenses and also supplied his rice for the month. The Mission furnished meat and vegetables. A close schedule of prayer, study, recitation and recreation kept us constantly occupied from 5:30 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Six subjects were taught: Bible introduction, personal evangelism, Genesis, elementary doctrine, music and child evangelism. All of these contributed much to our spiritual growth. Three days of special meetings with messages on "The New Birth" preceded the opening of school. Some students who had been weak in the faith received the assurance that they were born again.

Training in personal evangelism is the main objective of these schools, and our studies are not limited to theory alone. The men students and some of the women in teams of four spent Saturday mornings witnessing from house to house in this area. We shall never forget the joy and enthusiasm of the Sunday evening meetings when we gave reports of our experiences the day before. In three days we visited 210 homes, witnessed to 418 people, distributed and sold hundreds of tracts and booklets and led nineteen persons to Christ.

Many of the pastors in South Viet Nam were present at the impressive graduation service. How proud they were to see their young people march into the church to the tune of "Onward, Christian Soldiers." As they listened to the special addresses and the singing they were encouraged to believe that this one month of intensive training would do much to further the various activities of their churches.

I am happy to report that their expectations have been justified, for over the entire area we hear reports of the zeal of the Bible school students who are now taking an active part in the Sunday schools, young people's societies and gospel teams in their local churches. They all are looking forward with eagerness to the next session of the Vinh Long short term Bible school.

Bible Classes in Professional Schools

By REV. ARNI SHARESKI, *Congo*

Not often do state officials come to a mission station asking for someone to teach Bible in a state school. Yet that is what recently has been taking place in Belgian Congo wherever there are professional schools which specialize in technical courses.

Although the missionaries are remunerated for this service, no restrictions whatever are placed on the subjects taught. The missionary is at liberty to teach the Bible and related material to all students who choose to come to the class in *"Religion Protestante."*

The professional school at Boma has made available to us fourteen hours a week for Bible instruction. About seventy students come for an hour or two hours a week. The subjects are New Testament, Doctrine and Church History.

Much could be said about the progress these students are making in Bible knowledge. They are learning to lead in prayer, and they ask thoughtful questions. Perhaps a few class experiences would help to illustrate these results and also reflect the thinking of African young people.

One lesson was on the Bible principle of tithing, something not too well known among believers. Very early in the hour a student named Joseph stood to his feet, asserting emphatically, "For you people it isn't much but for us that's a great deal!" However, after carefully studying the few figures I wrote on the board they all agreed that not only are the individual contributions relatively small for a tither, but that the over-all results could certainly have far-

The short term Bible school, Vinh Long, Viet Nam

reaching effects in the ministry of the church.

One great obstacle to getting those important truths into their hearts is the language. All classes are in French, a language many of the students are beginning to learn but with difficulty. One young fellow reciting a Bible verse pronounced the word for grace like the word for grease (the two words are a little alike in French). Needless to say the rest of the class enjoyed a good laugh at his expense.

Their questions and answers are often strangely composed but they plainly have a desire to learn and their ability to retain what they learn is remarkable. They are beginning to purchase French Bibles to make the course more interesting for themselves. We can sympathize with them in many of these problems for some of us are in the process of learning their language.

Although we cannot boast of great results thus far in this ministry, we can say that there are evidences that these young men are grasping some of the deeper truths of the Word of God. In a recent class a young fellow explained, with little help, the difference between carnal and spiritual Christians. Another discussed the Christian's resistance to sin. Still another spoke on the prayer life of the believer.

We are praying that the students will learn more than simply an accumulation of religious facts. Our hope is that many of them, in these formative years of their lives, will be saved and that all will be firmly established in Bible truths and principles. Then they will live in victory over sin and become leading Christian citizens in their towns and villages.

Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love!

Jesus! name of wondrous love!
Name all other names above!
Unto which must every knee
Bow in deep humility.

Jesus! name of priceless worth
To the fallen sons of earth,
For the promise that it gave—
"Jesus shall His people save."

Jesus! only name that's given
Under all the mighty heaven,
Whereby man, to sin enslaved,
Bursts his fetters, and is saved.

—W. W. Howe.

C. E. THOMPSON

Pou Ang and family in front of their home, Cambodia

A Hearing for the Gospel

in Cambodia

By MRS. C. E. THOMPSON

THREE times in three days Pou Ang from Krong Teh had been to our home. He was in Kratie on business, having traveled two hundred miles from his jungle village. My husband met him about two years ago when he visited Krong Teh the first time. He pleaded with us to come and tell his people more about Jesus. As soon as possible we made the trip.

The first 150 miles we bumped along in the truck over the forest road. Then we proceeded eight miles on *no* road. A tribesman who wanted us to visit his village on the way strode ahead of the truck, cutting down trees and high brush. It had taken us three days to get that far. As we approached Pou Chree the startled women and children fled. One boy, holding his baby sister, stepped backwards into the fire, upsetting the boiling rice; then he fell head over heels trying to escape! I was the first white woman they had ever seen.

We cleared a place in the jungle for our tents, dug a shallow well for fresh water, and gradually won the villagers' confidence and friendship. That night, after a good service, we heard that no elephants could be hired for the eight-hour trek to Krong Teh, so we determined to walk. We left early, with Laurel, our two-year-old daughter, riding delightedly in a basket on our cook's back. By noon

we reached a large village of ten longhouses. The people showed only fear and curiosity.

Later as we sat eating our lunch in a gloomy longhouse I heard a giggle, followed by another and another until the women were hilarious. Their eyes were fastened on Laurel who sat with her rubber doll cradled in her arms. I put it into their outstretched hands. Such wonder, such glee over the tiny toes and perfect fingers, the lifelike eyes! Soon their curiosity was satisfied, the doll was returned and we were friends. They listened to the message quietly. "Would you like to believe?" we asked. "Yes," replied the men, "it sounds like the Truth but it is very new to us. Please come again to teach us some more." As we left the village the women smiled and waved and even squeezed my arms in farewell. We had made a beachhead for the Lord!

The day was scorchingly hot and the water holes few and far between. After a few hours we stopped to rest by a stream. There we met some tribesmen who told us that Pou Ang was away from home on business. Reluctantly we turned back, wondering if anyone would tell our friend we had tried to see him. Unaccustomed as most of us are to hiking, fifteen miles that day proved almost too much. We stumbled into our camp at Pou Chree sunburned, blistered and aching.

That night the villagers again listened intently as Mr. Taylor, our chairman, told the story of Jesus and slowly turned the pages of the picture scroll. While I watched their dark faces, the flickering light of the carbide lamp revealed disbelief, then fascination followed by wonder and joy as they heard of the blind receiving their sight, the lame walking and the sick being healed. The last picture showing Jesus hanging on the cross moved them deeply. They know all about sacrifices—blood sacrifices of chickens, pigs, cows and buffaloes. Quickly they grasped the significance of Calvary and sat hushed, unmoving. "O God," I prayed, "shine Thy light into these dark hearts and illumine their minds that they may understand and know and love Thee too."

The next morning we broke camp and our new friends gathered round to watch and to claim the "treasures" we threw out. All the little girls soon had bright, new earrings made from a piece of salvaged aluminum foil! I had learned six words of their language and it was fun to see the delight in the youngsters' faces as I tried to communicate with them.

There are so many poignant memories of that trip—the throbbing stillness of the jungle night, the consciousness of God's protecting care as a tiger prowled nearby, the unaccustomed hardness of gasoline cans instead of chairs around our supper table. The rice had become flavored with kerosene spilled during the rough ride. Seeing dozens of wild creatures out in broad daylight was exciting. A quick shot from my husband's gun provided us with a wild cow for meat. But the deepest impression we brought home was the terrible, terrible darkness and superstition in every heart in every village. Satan is the ruler and he is not willing to give up any of his territory.

We urge you to pray more and more, to intercede diligently for the Mnong peoples. We have been forbidden to do any further preaching in their villages. The provincial government wishes them to become Buddhists. We have appealed this decree (made by the governor of Kratie) to higher authorities and are awaiting the final decision. May we ask you to appeal with us to the highest Authority for entrance into this important area? ◆ ◆ ◆

Questions Thai Students Ask

By IRENE HEARN

A doctrine class can get into complications anywhere, but more especially when the teacher must use a foreign language.

Many questions that arise in Thai minds quite often concern things you and I take for granted. For instance, Miss Som Ji asked, "Did God create Adam as a man or little child?" Mr. Lai wanted to know whether all animals could talk in the beginning, and Mr. Tee asked, "When unbelievers are raised from the dead will they get a new body to go into eternal punishment?"

Mr. Udome posed this one, "Do animals have a soul or spirit?" (Cf. Eccl. 3:19-21). When discussing this question I asked if it were really important. But this is a very crucial matter among Buddhists who believe in transmigration, i.e., that the spirit of the dead is reborn again and again as a human being or animal. The teacher must learn to "sit where they sit" in order to really know their problems and help them find the answer in God's Word.

Sometimes there are difficulties in the Thai translation of the Scriptures. What seems clear in the English Bible may not convey the same idea in Thai. That adds to the difficulty in establishing a point of doctrine.

As each class ends my prayer is that what has been said will enable "faithful men . . . to teach others." (2 Tim. 2:2).

Some of the villagers gathered at Pou Chree, Cambodia

C. E. THOMPSON

THE GROWING SUNDAY SCHOOL

MAVIS L. ANDERSON, Editor

Missionary Education in the Sunday School

In our National Sunday School Standard* we ask the question, "Do you have a planned program for missionary education?" The answer invariably is, "We have Missionary Sunday once a month." But investigation usually reveals that missionary songs are sung, a missionary story is told or a letter read, and an offering taken for missions. Is this missionary education?

A planned program of missionary education will include both instruction and participation, and its impact will be largely dependent upon the way it is presented. Missionary education doesn't just happen—it must be planned.

Who should be responsible for such a program? Because it reaches more people of more ages for more minutes than any other agency of the average church, the Sunday school is the place to begin a program of missionary education. Start by appointing a missionary committee, choosing members who have a heart for missions and an interest in the Sunday school. In a very small church you may have just a missionary chairman. Those responsible for missionary education work closely with the Sunday school executive committee and through the department heads in planning and promoting the program.

PLANNING FOR ACTION

There are many different plans and ideas that can be pursued for systematic missionary education. You may plan for a three-year program covering all the mission fields represented by our Society, devoting one quarter to a field. This allows three Missionary Sundays to develop the study, with the same field featured in each department. Avoid bringing departments together for Missionary Sunday. This too must be a part of age-level training.

Another plan is to assign a field to a department or a class for a year. To personalize the field further, assign a missionary family to each class. Wherever possible the family chosen has children of the age of the class. The class may make an album with pictures and information about the field and the missionary. They can write to the family. A bulletin board and map of the country will add interest to the classroom.

PLANNING FOR INTEREST

To keep the program moving and colorful the committee should be alert to collect as much missionary information as possible from missionary letters, from THE ALLIANCE WITNESS and other missionary magazines, and from travel magazines and agencies. This material should be filed and made available when needed.

The committee works with the superintendent and department heads in publicizing Missionary Sunday. They can make use of posters, the bulletin board, dodgers and church bulletins. They should supply the pastor with inserts for the church bulletin and pulpit announcements. Through posters, pictures, flags and music, they should plan to create an atmosphere which will say "This is Missionary Sunday!"

Obtain missionary speakers whenever possible. Make arrangements in advance for missionaries on convention tour to participate in the Sunday school's missionary education program. This participation should always be on a departmental level. The time schedules can be arranged so missionaries can speak to different groups.

An exhibit or missionary display area can enlarge interest in missions. Build up the library with missionary books and biographies, and create interest in the books through reviews and bulletin board promotion.

PLANNING FOR GIVING

Through our Sunday schools we teach the value of money and the principle of tithing. We begin early to teach giving through the local church. We believe instruction in stewardship is a vital part of missionary education. Encourage pledges at the time of the missionary convention. To stimulate personal interest in giving, your Sunday school may want to undertake a special project. Information concerning special needs may be secured from the Foreign Department. Some fields can use small items for hospitals. Stamps may be collected for Colombia, South America. Before undertaking any of these projects complete information should be secured from the Foreign Department, 260 West 44th Street, New York 36, New York.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

1. Is the missionary program of our school as definite as its curriculum?
2. How would our teachers rate on a quiz covering the missionary program of our Society?
3. What missionary projects (home or foreign) have we completed during the last year?
4. What steps can we take *now* to improve the missionary education program of our church?

"What are churches for but to make missionaries? What is education for but to train them? . . . What is life for but to fulfill the purpose of missions, the enthronement of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men?"

MEMO TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Did you have a Leadership Training class in 1958? Have you reported it to the National Sunday School Office? We are waiting to issue credits to all workers who have completed a course. Plan now for a Leadership Training program.

*Copies of the National Sunday School Standard can be obtained by writing the National Sunday School Office, C. & M. A., 260 West 44th St., New York 36, N. Y.

CLIFFORD E. HARROD, Reporter

News reports may be sent direct to Rev. C. E. Harrod, The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, 1426 Wake Forest Rd., Raleigh, N. C.

To the Fields

Rev. and Mrs. Joseph F. Ost sailed from New York November 28 for their third term in the Ivory Coast, French West Africa.

On Furlough

Rev. Richard E. Ward arrived in New York on November 20 from Jordan. His wife and family preceded him in September.

Rev. and Mrs. K. E. Troutman and children, Kenneth, Jr., and Camelia, arrived in New York November 21 from New Guinea.

The New Generation

To *Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Mowris,* Batesville, Ark., a son, Timothy Keith, on September 16.

To *Rev. and Mrs. Paul Brittin,* Trenton, N. J., a daughter, Sharlene Joy, on September 2.

To *Rev. and Mrs. William A. Fry,* Rome, Ga., a daughter, Deborah Anne, on November 2.

To *Rev. and Mrs. Thomas P. Bailey,* Nyack, N. Y., a daughter, Deborah Joyce, on November 18.

To *Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Ellenberger,* Wissel Lakes, New Guinea, a daughter, Christine Annette, on November 28.

To *Rev. and Mrs. Ralph E. Godwin,* Pittsburgh, Pa., a son, Andrew Charles, on November 26.

To *Rev. and Mrs. W. Persons,* Bangkok, Thailand, a daughter, Debbie Mae, on November 23.

Evangelist Available

Rev. Roland L. Trivett announces that he is available for a combined ministry of song evangelism and preaching or for either phase of work in evangelistic services. His address is 939 Sleepy Hollow Rd., Pittsburgh 34, Pa.

Chaplain Promoted

Chaplain Ralph G. Caldwell, of the U. S. Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Me., has recently been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the Navy.

With the Lord

Mrs. Ada Hill Byers, of Bellwood, Pa., wife of the late Rev. Samuel J. Byers, went to be with the Lord on October 18. She and her husband were early workers in The Christian and Missionary Alliance, having been directly connected with the founding of the Eastern District. The first conference of that district was held in their home at Coalport, Pa., with less than a dozen Alliance ministers present. Mr. Byers passed away in April, 1936.

Surviving are five children. The funeral was conducted by her grandson, Rev. Harold Hill Byers, Jr., pastor of First Presbyterian Church, DuBois, Pa.

New Church Organized at Regina

Twenty-three adults and seventeen young people and children met on Thursday, October 9, with Rev. G. M. Blackett, district superintendent, to form the charter membership of the new Fourth Avenue Alliance Church of Regina, Sask. This event followed one year's activities for this branch church, begun by the pastor and congregation of the Regina Alliance Tabernacle. The pastor, Rev. James Conner, was offered the facilities of the Canadian Bible College, which have proved most acceptable. Rev. Alvin Martin, acting president of the College, was appointed to serve as pastor.

The first services were held on October 20, 1957, with 104 persons in Sunday school. The present Sunday school attendance has reached the 200 mark. Various faculty members, as well as students, have assisted in preaching, teaching and in music. The first missionary convention brought a pledge of $1,600 for the world-wide work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Canadian Bible College Experiences Revival

The faculty, staff and student body of the Canadian Bible College, Regina, Sask., will long remember the beginning of the fall term of 1958, for God was pleased to send unusual spiritual revival through the Spirit-anointed ministry of Rev. Gordon A. Skitch. Mr. Skitch spent ten days on the campus. The moving of God's Spirit was felt from the beginning, and again and again a holy hush would come over the audience. Many students presented themselves anew to God for the Spirit's infilling and His service.

When not engaged in public services the speaker was kept busy counseling and praying for students. Writes a campus reporter, "The revival manifested itself in a genuine concern for souls. Following the return of the students to the campus after the Thanksgiving vacation there were glowing reports of how God used students for the salvation of souls. The results of this revival will be felt the world around!"

Two Busy Men

If you want a job done well, says the old proverb, give it to a busy man.

For three years Rev. Don Kenyon, of Nyack Missionary College, has taken time away from a heavy teaching schedule to write a commentary on the Sunday school lesson for the pages of The Alliance Witness. Now other pressing work has compelled him to relinquish this pleasant task and we have had to look for someone else to carry on. And we have found him—another busy man.

Beginning with our issue of December 31 the commentary will be written by Rev. Harold J. Sutton, assistant superintendent of the Western Pennsylvania District.

We extend to Mr. Kenyon our hearty thanks for his excellent work and at the same time welcome Mr. Sutton again to the pages of the Witness.

New Life Crusade Brings Refreshing

Rev. Wilberton C. Neff, pastor of The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church at Lewistown, Pa., reports spiritual refreshing during a recent New Life Crusade held with Rev. Gordon Anderson, of Nyack, N. Y. Many sought God during the campaign and testified later of having definite needs met.

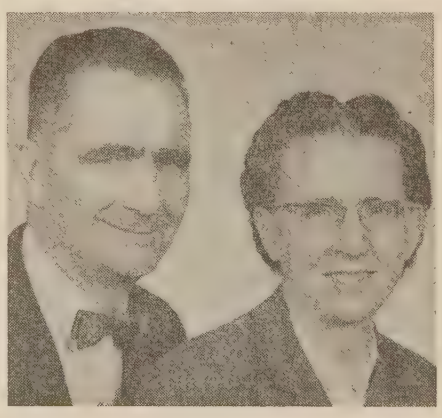
Maryland Church Revived

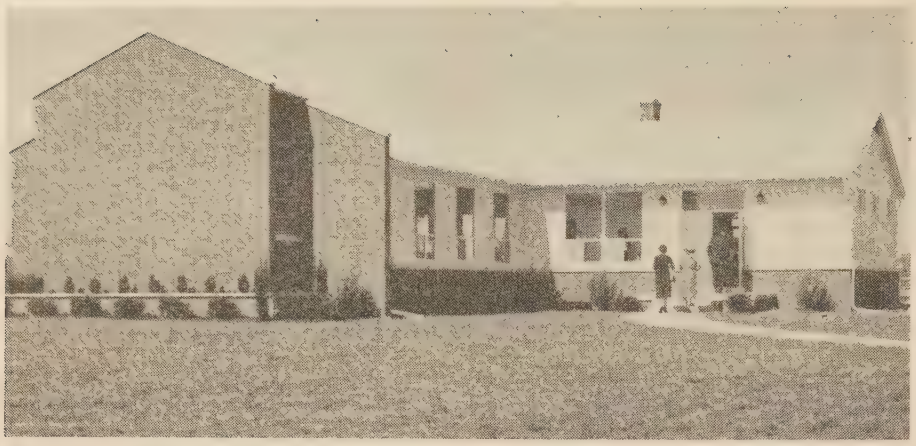
Rev. H. P. Rankin, of Orlando, Fla., was the instrument God used to bring revival to The Alliance Church of Brunswick, Md., during a recent series of special meetings. Rev. Franklyn Klein, the pastor, stated that unusual spiritual refreshing resulted as souls sought God nightly.

Gulf Coast Missionary Groups Meet

Representatives of five churches of the Gulf Coast area of Florida met recently in Winter Haven for the fall rally of the Women's Missionary Prayer Fellowship. Mrs. T. G. Mangham, president of the women's work in the Southeastern District, spoke on the Kentucky mountain missions; Mrs. A.

Rev. and Mrs. J. F. Ost
French West Africa





Ashby Lane Alliance Church, Valley Station, Ky., is sponsored by the Louisville church

N. Bostrom, of Clearwater, told of the Mexican Border work, and Mrs. Lambert Bartels, of Tampa, told of her work with her husband among the Spanish-speaking people. Mrs. Margaret Noblitt, of Birmingham, Ala., spoke on the work of the Jewish center there.

Mrs. James Piper was elected president; Mrs. James Strickland, vice-president; Mrs. W. F. Zeitz, treasurer, and Mrs. Hazel U. Welch, secretary.

Louisville Church Fosters New Work

The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, 21st and Oak Streets, Louisville, Ky., opened a new church twelve miles south of the city in a rapidly growing suburb, Valley Station, Ky., holding the first service on Sunday, October 12. More than 300 persons attended the first meeting.

The five and one-half acre plot on which the church is built was purchased by the parent church, which has also financed the building. Both churches will continue as one organization until separate organizations are feasible. Rev. Roland E. Coffey, assistant pastor to Rev. Charles A. Epperson, will be the supply pastor of the new congregation. The nucleus for the extension project was approximately seventy-five members from the parent church. Services have been well attended and interest in the community is high.

Miami Missionary Convention

A year of missionary emphasis in the Central Alliance Church, Miami, Fla., was climaxed with a successful missionary convention held November 2-9 under the direction of the pastor, Rev. Gordon H. Keeney.

Through the year each field of Alliance missionary endeavor has been represented by a group in the church. During the convention each group sponsored a booth featuring maps, pictures, curios and information posters of its field. All twenty-two booths were set up in the fellowship hall and were open to the public before and after each service. Further atmosphere was created when the choir appeared dressed in foreign costumes.

Rev. L. L. King, Foreign Secretary; Rev. Fred Ruhl, missionary to the Philippines, and Rev. John Fitzstevens, a member of Central Church and now missionary to Viet Nam, were speakers for the convention.

On Saturday night, after a stirring message by Mr. King, fourteen young people responded to the call of the Lord to His service.

Wilmington Alliance Dedicates Church

The new Bible Fellowship Church of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Wilmington, Del., was dedicated on November 2, with Dr. H. L. Turner bringing the message. The dedicatory prayer was offered by Dr. H. M. Shuman, President-Emeritus and former pastor of the church. The district superintendent, Rev. J. W. McGarvey, presided at the act of dedication, in which the pastor, Rev. John L. Stirzaker, and the chairman of the board of trustees, Mr. Thomas Short, also took part. The Honorable J. Caleb Boggs, Governor of Delaware, was present to bring greetings.

The church is of modified colonial architecture and furnished in oak. The main auditorium with balcony seats approximately 400 persons. The lower auditorium, accommodating about 325, and the Sunday school wing provide for a completely departmentalized school. The tower is equipped with Schulmerich carillonic bells, a memorial gift. The church is located at 29th and Van Buren, and a large parking space is available from both streets.

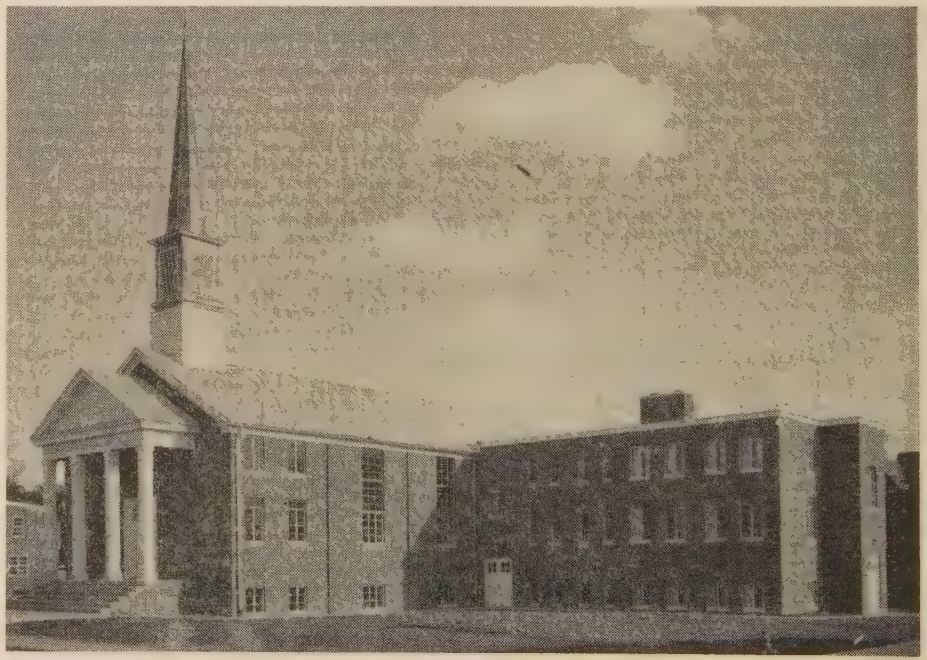
The building was erected at a cost of approximately $135,000, but the finished church is valued at many thousands of dollars above this figure due to the hundreds of hours of volunteer labor by many of the members. The main construction work was done by Messrs. Thomas Short, trustee chairman, Elwood Vaughn, Sr., elder, and Roy Lynam, trustee.

The church in Wilmington was founded in 1901 during the ministry of the late Rev. G. Verner Brown. Others who served are: John Coxe, H. M. Shuman, J. V. Krall, W. I. McGarvey, Tracy C. Miller, H. D. Stoddard, George Jones, M. V. Lindsey, F. C. Miller and Frank Wyre. Mr. Stirzaker began his ministry in Wilmington in 1953.

LCMA Activities

Dr. Richard Harvey, field representative of the Laymen's Crusade for Missionary Action, represented the organization in a series of services in New England in October. He began with a week of meetings in Providence, R. I. His ministry in Warwick, R. I., a new work conducted by three recent graduates of Nyack Missionary College, was blessed of God in the salvation of young people. He also conducted a Sunday school seminar in Foxboro, Mass., and a spiritual clinic for laymen in Brockton, Mass.

The new Bible Fellowship Church of the C. & M. A., Wilmington, Del.



Sunday

MATTHEW 27:26-66 (verse 50).

The loftiest greatness is not achieved by mere gifts of power; the touch of suffering was needed to add the supreme glory of heroism in the hour of Christ's shame and agony and death. It has been said in language most striking and yet most true: "Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus died like a God." . . . He had come to the world to die and now death could bring Him no surprise and no defeat.—A. B. SIMPSON.

Monday

GALATIANS 5:16-26 (verse 25).

All the questions of holiness are solved if you understand your relation to the Holy Spirit. If you want to change and transform your disposition, you will be disappointed and overthrown over and over again; but when you come to understand that not by the energy of the flesh but by the energy of the Spirit, by breathing in the Spirit, rejoicing in the Spirit, and praying in the Spirit, the conquest will become possible, you will then pass from conflict into victory.—A. T. PIERSON.

Tuesday

PSALM 50 (verse 23).

Thanksgiving is a God-exalting work. Though nothing can add the least cubit to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts Him in the eyes of others. Praise is a setting forth of God's honor, a lifting up of His name, displaying the trophy of His goodness, proclaiming His excellency, spreading His renown, breaking open the box of ointment whereby the sweet savor and perfume of God's name is sent abroad into the world.—THOMAS WATSON.

Wednesday

HEBREWS 13:1-15 (verse 8).

Oh, how sweet the glorious message,
Simple faith may claim;
Yesterday, today, forever,
Jesus is the same.
Still He loves to save the sinful,
Heal the sick and lame;
Cheer the mourner, still the tempest;
Glory to His name!

—A. B. SIMPSON.

Thursday

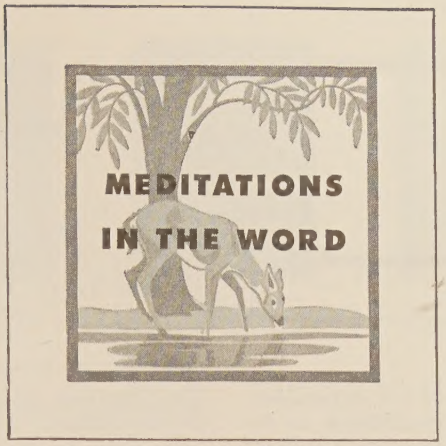
GENESIS 25:1-18 (verse 5).

Like Abraham, who gave all his wealth to his son of *promise,* God bestowed all that He possessed upon His Son of *fulfilled promise* (John 3:35). In the lowly manger we see this Son of God's riches, God's grace, God's mercy, God's love and God's provision of eternal life through His own, taking the first step in His condescension as creator to creature in order that He might redeem fallen "creature" (man) and make him coinheritor of God's "all." That condescension can only be fully appreciated as we prayerfully read Philippians 2:6-9.—PAMEH.

Friday

PSALM 112 (verse 4).

Should we be astonished if God often leaves us in a state of obscurity, lack of



Edited by EDITH M. BEYERLE

feeling and temptation? These trials purify the humble soul; and to the unfaithful they will serve to correct their faults, and they will confound those who even in their prayers wish but to flatter their timidity and their pride. But if an innocent spirit, detached from visible help, suffers the inward darkness, she should humble herself, redouble her prayers and her fervor, and quietly adore God's plans for her.—FÉNELON.

Saturday

ISAIAH 41:1-7 (verse 6).

When Robert Burns was at the height of his power he saw a young lad, Walter, following him and turning to him said, "What do you wish?" Walter answered timidly, "Oh, I wish that some day I might be a great writer like you." And Burns, greathearted as he was, put his hand on the head of the young lad and said, "You can be a great writer some day, Walter, and you will be." That boy became Sir Walter Scott, and he was forever grateful to Robert Burns for the word of encouragement spoken to a troubled boy.—SELECTED.

Sunday

MATTHEW 28:1-10 (verse 10).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ guarantees victory over every obstacle that can obstruct our way. It is the pattern of His kingly power over all forces and adversaries, and guarantees to us who abide in Him and press on in the power of His resurrection that nothing can prevail against us, but that all things shall be subdued under the victorious feet of overcoming faith.—A. B. SIMPSON.

Monday

1 TIMOTHY 4 (verse 12).

A bishop was once on tour in India, examining candidates for baptism. He was determined that no one was to join the Indian Church without being sure what he was doing. So at one mission station, gathering the candidates together in the presence of Mr. Murray, their missionary, the bishop asked them, "What is it to be a Christian?" He obviously expected some theological answer. But a better answer came when one of the candidates arose and pointing to the missionary said, "To be a Christian is to live like Mr. Murray." —SELECTED.

Tuesday

PSALM 51 (verse 17).

The joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin; this will still continue. And the deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart is therefore the best thank-offering.—J. J. S. PEROWNE.

Wednesday

1 CORINTHIANS 13 (verse 13).

Into the silent places
The old year goes tonight,
Bearing old pain, old sadness,
Old care and old delight,
Mistakes and fears and failures,
The things that could not last,
But naught that e'er was truly ours
Goes with him to the past.

Out of the silent places
The New Year comes tonight;
Bringing new pain—new sadness
New care and new delight.
Go forth to meet him bravely
The New Year all untried;
The things the old year left us;
Faith, Hope and Love, abide!

—ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT.

Thursday

GENESIS 25:18-34 (verse 21).

It was God's will from the beginning that Isaac should have a son in order to continue the line of faith begun in Abraham (Seth in the background). However, natural circumstances hindered until Isaac made it a subject of definite prayer. He might have succumbed to conditions, folded his hands and said, "This must be the will of God." That would have been the procedure of many persons, mistakenly concluding that attitude to be submission to the will of God. There are times to submit: there are times to "intreat." Submission is often the easier path.—PAMEH.

Friday

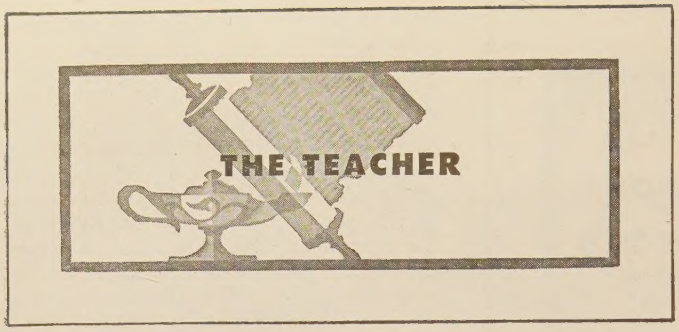
ROMANS 15:1-13 (verse 3).

When Wilfred Grenfell, the beloved Labrador medical missionary, was a youth still uncertain what to do with his life, his mother gave him this prayer: "Teach me to do today the thing that pleaseth Thee." Both while we are waiting God's guidance in big decisions and after those decisions are made, we should live each day with the prayer and purpose of doing only what pleases the Lord.—SELECTED.

Saturday

JOHN 12:23-33 (verse 24).

It is just in the very corner of everyday life where God has put us that this can take place, and the surrounding influences can have their share in bringing down to death the old nature. It is no mystical, imaginary world that draws out the latent forms of self, but the commonplace, matter-of-fact world about us.—PARABLES OF THE CHRIST LIFE.



By DON J. KENYON

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON—December 28, 1958

Jesus Acknowledged as the Christ

Mark 8:27-35

DEVOTIONAL READING—Acts 2:29-36

GOLDEN TEXT—*"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*—MATTHEW 16:16.

BACKGROUND AND LESSON ORIENTATION

The preaching of Christ and the outreach of His miraculous power filled the whole countryside with speculation as to His identity. Not only had He taught new and radical doctrines but He had even boldly reproved the Pharisees. More, He had fed 5,000 people at one time and 4,000 at another, a fact which greatly increased His popularity with the masses. They were ready to make Him a King by force. They had made of Him a Messiah that met their most exacting (but carnal) expectations. Christ saw the threat of this misconception. He felt it was time He warned His disciples of this "leaven of the Pharisees." The time had also come to have a showdown with the masses as to what He expected of His followers. Blindness had even taken hold of the inner circle.

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Pharisees nurtured the idea that the true Messiah would declare Himself with a sign from heaven. This had already been done on myriad occasions. What they were asking for here was a sign which they could endorse on their own terms. Just what would have met their conditions is not revealed. Their demand was just as definite a temptation as if it had come from Satan. Mark records a refusal of their terms. The other writers indicate that Christ offered them a historic reference to Jonah's experience, relating it to the climactic sign of His resurrection. Jesus warned His disciples against the corrosive spirit that sees without believing. It is contagious because of the deceitfulness of the human heart. It is possible to know the right answers and then to not act on them.

SIMPLIFIED OUTLINE

1. *The Question of Christ's Identity*—Mark 8:27-30.
2. *The Reaction to Christ's Death*—Mark 8:31-33.
3. *The Statement of Christ's Claims*—Mark 8:34, 35.

KEY WORD ANALYSIS

"The Christ"—*ho christos* (v. 29), "anointed one." Matthew adds "the Son of the living God," which makes the confession startling. The term in the Old Testament was used freely of prophets, kings, priests, who were anointed for office, and also of Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). Christ did not deny that this term might be used of Him but did not want His disciples to use it of Him among the people, whose idea of the term was mixed. Many false messiahs were abroad, but their ministries were not related to the will of God. He was the "servant" of Isaiah's prophecy who had come to die for the sins of men, as He made plain immediately after this Spirit-inspired confession made by Peter.

COMMENTARY ON THE PRINTED TEXT

1. *The Question of Christ's Identity*

As Christ and His disciples moved into Caesarea Philippi the subject of His true identity was a subject of earnest discussion. He Himself brought up the subject. The answers that were given certainly show that Christ was, by the average man, highly revered and respected. To be a prophet in Israel compared to Jeremiah, Elijah, John the Baptist, etc., was a great compliment. Christ had the manner and message of a prophet. His break with tradition, plus His attack on the religious leaders, sent wild speculation through the multitudes.

But most important to Him was His disciples' opinion of His identity. Had they imbibed enough of His spirit to assure them that they were the disciples of God's own Son? While He could not cope with passivity He could deal with active opposition. He wanted a declaration of intention from them. Opinions were plentiful but confessions were now in order.

2. *The Reaction to Christ's Death*

Matthew gives us the key to the transition. At the very point of this confession Christ began the revelation of the redemptive nature of the future they would share with Him. He came to suffer and to die and to be raised again. His words fit exactly into the prophecy concerning Him in Isaiah 53, but such ideas fell on deaf ears. Suffering, rejection and death were incongruous with their dreamy idea of the future. The reaction to this teaching was therefore violent.

Jesus would not be a party to deception. If He was the Messiah He must be the Messiah of God's promise, not of their dream. Peter took hold upon Christ and laid himself open to the most serious rebuke which Christ ever offered any man, a rebuke both sharp and meaningful. Any opposition to the redemptive purpose of God is inspired of the devil and must be called by its right name. If the rebuke which Jesus gave stunned Peter the truth of it should stun us.

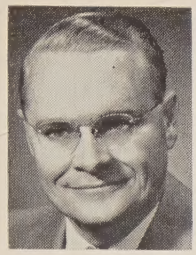
3. *The Statement of Christ's Claims*

All men who would relate themselves to Christ must understand exactly what that relationship entails. False disciples will be exposed by the facts. Christ shifted the center of things from self to God. The disciple's first allegiance is to the Kingdom.

One great proof that this was spoken to the ages is the mention of the cross, which had little or no significance until after Calvary. If a man desires to save his resources or spend them sparingly for his own gratification alone, his life will be a spiritual failure. To be a spiritual success one must give all that he has. What a man relinquishes for the glory of God is an eternal investment. These things determine the entire trend of one's life. Self-denial is no virtue unless that which prompts it is a worthy motive. History as well as the Word of God has proved that the men who walk with Christ are those who pay a great price to make the prayer "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" a way of life.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR LESSON PREPARATION

This lesson treats of the principle of lordship. It is one matter to declare boldly the messiahship of Jesus. It is another to carry through on the declaration when the meaning of making Christ Lord is known. Peter led the disciples in the chorus of acclamation; seconds later he denied the very truth he had confessed. He questioned the divine means to the divine end. Emphasize the duty of committal.



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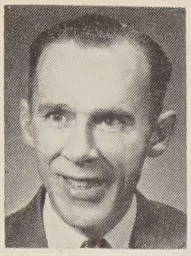

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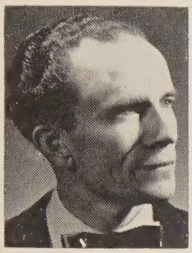

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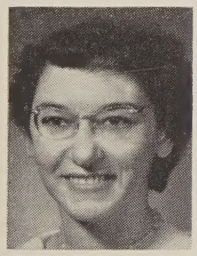

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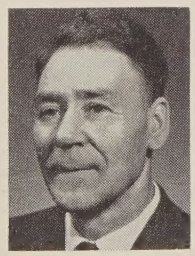

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Born to Give Them Second Birth

POLITICAL disturbances that hold central attention in the news
may scarcely receive a mention
in missionary correspondence. Even from earth's tinder boxes
missionaries write letters
that are wholly concerned with spiritual conquests.
It is not that they are unmindful
of the threatening storm. They are absorbed
with inspiring men to faith in Christ
and nurturing vital personal relationship with Him.
Rumblings of strife
among the nations remind them
that the time is short. These things intensify their concentration
upon the divine commission rather than distract them.

It is to be expected
that news reports from certain countries
and reports of missionaries
should appear to have their origin in different worlds.
Under a canopy of divine ordering
Christ's messengers persistently preach the Word
and strengthen the Church.
This they will do until He returns in power and glory.

It is not difficult to imagine news commentators of the ancient Roman Empire
being occupied with such things
as legionnaires bivouacking in Lybia and in Gaul.
They knew nothing of the story which begins,
"There were in the same country
shepherds abiding in the field . . ."
But the report which angels sounded over the Judean hills
holds abiding significance for the sons of men.

Tension in Formosan waters and in West Berlin,
fear of Soviet world dominion
are the things clamoring for predominance at present.
To those with ears attuned to hear,
the message of the Saviour's birth is of transcendent importance.
Kingdoms perish and
human control is transitory,
but undimmed majesty belongs to Him of
whom the poet wrote,

"Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth."

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